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wellnessworks

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA



SELF-RENEWAL & PERSONAL GROWTH

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“In the depth of winter, I finally learned that within me there lay an invincible summer.” ~Albert Camus

To be honest, it’s difficult for me to feel the promise of spring renewal when a late winter blizzard rages outside my office and newspapers on my desk speak of dire economic news. But as Albert Camus knew well, renewal is not so much about what is happening around us but rather about what is occurring within. Renewal is an inner process, a choice each of us can make to replenish our run down mental and physical stores. Renewal is an inevitable and vital requirement in the natural world, and it is no less essential for humans. Our work at Counseling & Consulting Services requires us to be present in a full-hearted, empathetic way as we help students overcome difficult situations and achieve success at the U. Our ability to do this work day after day absolutely requires each of us to engage in some form of personal renewal to bring our full selves to the work. But I would argue that renewal is an essential part of everyone’s success and competence whatever our life’s work.

Neither a hot party conversation topic nor a frequent “To Do” list item, self-renewal is not particularly easily said and less easily done. Part of the challenge is to understand what self-renewal really involves, what options are available to us. This issue of *Wellness Works* addresses that very challenge, helping us explore the meaning of renewal across six different dimensions. Read carefully enough and you may even learn what snakes can teach us about the renewal process. And just in case you can’t quite bridge the gap between understanding and doing, this issue has you covered there as well—with concrete suggestions on taking action, from learning to forgive and thinking positively, to healthy self-renewing foods you can eat, and the inherent renewal of civic engagement.

I hope this issue inspires within you a new commitment to self-care, renewal and personal growth

Glenn Hirsch, PhD, LP
Interim Director
University Counseling & Consulting Services

“Whether you and I...will renew the world some day remains to be seen. But within ourselves we must renew it each day.” ~Hermann Hesse



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*social*wellness

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Committing to life-long learning and personal development. Seeking out opportunities beyond “book knowledge” that include creativity, critical thinking, and being intuitive and expressive.

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An active process of becoming more aware of, and making choices toward, a more successful existence through a multi-dimensional approach to health.

MAKING RENEWAL A RIGHT & A RITE

Taking Time to Recharge

Andrea Gilats, PhD—LearningLife director, College of Continuing Education

Many plants and animals with which we share our planet offer awe-inspiring examples of renewal rituals—caterpillars become butterflies, crocuses bravely break through the still-cold earth, trees leaf out and bud, horses have a foaling season, and the list goes on. Just contemplating the ways living things renew themselves is itself a refreshing break.

Surprisingly, it turns out that one of nature's most elegant cycles of renewal is performed by the slinking, slippery ground snake, be it garter, rattler or python. When it comes to shedding what is no longer useful, devoting time to self-care through rest and cleansing, and ultimately emerging new and ready for more growth, these lowly belly-crawlers have achieved a level of mastery.

To prove the point, let's follow a molting snake. We'll call her



Goldy. Goldy is hard-wired to know that she is vulnerable during her molt, so she has found a safe, comfortable, out-of-the-way place for her ritual. Her first step toward renewal, shedding her tight old skin, is an active but slow process; biologically, there is no way to rush it.

Next, having shed what no longer fits, Goldy rests, giving her new skin time to shape itself to her freshened form. She is a picture of patience as she allows it to fuse with her body. Finally, when her new skin becomes resilient and protective, Goldy senses her re-

newal is complete, and she returns to her daily snake-life to continue her growth cycle.

Goldy offers a great example of the kind of regular rituals we humans need for self-renewal. But how do we make time to “molt” given that our lives are over-crammed with “living?” How do we call time-out from routines and obligations that keep us from experiencing stillness and don't offer space to receive new energy and insights? As renowned life coach Richard Leider says, when people complain that they're too busy, ask “Busy doing what?”

continued on page 6



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Below are some suggestions for self-renewal culled from reading, listening and life-experience:

Engage in an intentional stress-shedding activity. Participate in this activity for at least two hours each week at the same time and place. If you do nothing else, do this. There are powerful reasons why virtually all religions and cultures have some kind of weekly Sabbath, and renewal is one of them.

Choose a noncompetitive activity that will allow you to let go of the pressures of the past week, whether it's attending religious services, participating in a structured activity like an aerobics or yoga class, or engaging in a weekly volunteer activity. Make sure your shedding-time is social and includes people you trust and with whom you are

comfortable. Give your choice some thought and make a commitment. Above all, promise to keep your stress-shedding time sacrosanct.

In addition to your stress-shedding time, build at least two of these one-hour-a-week activities into your schedule. Try several to decide which suit you best. It is perfectly okay to spend four hours a week in renewal.

Lose yourself in something engrossing. It can be a hobby, a book, a game, listening to music or another activity that fully engages your mind.

Engage in physical activity. Move for at least one hour a week. You do not need to do the full hour at once. You can exercise two or three times a week in 20

or 30 minute chunks. Walk, run, lift weights, do isometrics, raise your heart rate or lengthen your muscles. Just do something.

Meditate. Consider a half-hour each week. Sit quietly in nature or a darkened room, or lie on your back with your legs and arms naturally splayed. If you find yourself becoming anxious or restless, concentrate on your breathing as a way of "thinking nothing." If you can't be still, walk on a treadmill at a modest pace, knit, or engage in any relaxing activity that involves repetitive, easy, rhythmic movement. The idea is to create inner space for a short time each week.

Take a long, leisurely bath. Then stand up and take a little shower. Literally, cleanse yourself.

Go somewhere else. It can be somewhere you haven't visited in quite a while or that you have never visited. Simply extricating ourselves from our daily environment is an easy-to-do form of renewal.

Debrief the past week. Talk with a friend, partner, spouse or associate. Be attentive to spending about the same amount of time on each of your weeks. This standing date will help you gain perspective, select and imprint memories, and rebalance before beginning a new week.

Escape to a story. Read a novel, listen to a great speaker online, watch a documentary on TV, or go to a movie or play. Stories are cathartic; they cleanse us.

Make or build something. Anything you create counts—dinner, a sand castle, a new method for keeping track of your work or

school tasks, a change in the arrangement of your living room, a chart, a sweater—you get the idea. You don't have to complete your project in an hour. If you choose a larger project, just make sure you devote an hour a week to it. Using the creativity with which we're all born is a potent form of renewal.

Self-renewal is mandated by nature—it is our right. As human beings, we can personalize our rites of renewal, choosing rituals that will keep us fresh and new, even when life feels heavy. In general, experts agree that regularly shedding stress, being part of social networks, making time for family and friends, enjoying physical exercise, and building regular, intentional relaxation into our lives will keep us balanced, optimistic and healthy.

The U of M has several programs and resources to help with personal renewal including:

The Center for Spirituality and Healing (www.csh.umn.edu) is a research and education pioneer in integrative medicine, holistic healing and complementary care, and offers a variety of programs and speakers related to renewal. Their renowned and very popular Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction program is offered on campus and at metro-area locations.

LearningLife (www.learninglife.umn.edu), from the College of Continuing Education, is an accessible learning community for all of us “who truly believe that life keeps getting more and more interesting.” People in midlife and beyond

can find workshops, short courses, programs, events and resources on positive aging, life skills, lifelong learning and more.

The Minnesota Landscape Arboretum (www.arboretum.umn.edu) is truly a haven of renewal throughout the seasons. A walk there when the crab apples or lilacs are in bloom is a walk in heaven, as is peering at the astounding variety of shrubs, flowers and other flora. The Arboretum's Nature Notes blog (www.arboretum.umn.edu/naturenotes.aspx) offers a captivating, richly detailed tour through this special Minnesota place. ■

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CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

From the Classroom to the Community

Emily Stickler—student, School of Journalism and Mass Communication

Every year the Career and Community Learning Center (CCLC) brings together 20 academic departments, 2,000 students, and a number of staff and faculty to incorporate community involvement into university coursework.

While the term to describe this collaboration—“service-learning”—was coined in the 1960s, it was not until the mid- to late 1990s that the University of Minnesota truly embraced it by placing students in volunteer positions with metro area organizations that address community-based needs and works.

“This kind of interaction gives people experience. If [students] are going to get jobs after college, they will need experience in diverse environments to prove they can work with others and be adaptable,” says Laurel Hirt, service-learning and community involvement director at CCLC. “These are crucial skills to learn.” This begins with paying attention outside of personal interests and embracing the diverse environment of the Twin Cities. “We’re developing critical thinkers who are civically engaged who will question what they’re seeing,” she adds.

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Gayle Englund

senior compliance consultant, UMPhysicians

For many years I have struggled with anxiety and stress in my life. I have an incessant need for structure and being in control—and I know a lot of people like me in that way. Yoga offers some ME time to calm and focus, to relax and just breathe. Using that approach to manage other areas of my life is exciting—a renewed way of thinking, really. I am trying to learn to let things ‘be’ and finding more ease in life.



CCLC is affiliated with approximately 250 community partners, in which service-learning students are placed based on interest and area of study.

“In our realm we look at service-learning as a ‘lived’ experience that has been identified by the community as needed,” Hirt says. Promoting civic engagement through service-learning means allowing students to learn by being actively involved, she says.

According to Hirt, a not uncommon result of the classes is long-term civic engagement. “Between 92 and 93 percent of students who took service-learning classes last semester state they will stay involved in the community,” says Hirt. Many students, she says, go

on to work or volunteer at nonprofits or teach service learning courses once they’ve graduated. Making the classes more accessible will only further this involvement. “Our goal for the future is that anyone who wants an experience in a service-learning class could have one,” Hirt says. “We want to continue to be a place for students, as well as staff, to find additional skills and have diverse experiences throughout their time at the U.”

Hirt also stresses the importance of getting involved beyond service-learning courses. CCLC advisors can offer guidance to students, staff and faculty who may be interested in volunteering their time at one of the many organizations in the metro area that provide a multitude of services from immigration

Finding the Right Volunteer Experience For You

Volunteer and service-work can be rewarding, but it is a real commitment. Ensure you and the organization fully benefit from your volunteer experience by first finding the right opportunity for you.

- **Be honest with yourself.** How much time can you commit? Willing to drive a significant distance or invest money if need be?
- **Assess your interests.** Want to work with children or the elderly? Clean up the environment? Match your interests with your volunteer experience for greater enjoyment and meaning.
- **Assess your skills.** Excel in certain areas that might benefit a non-profit? Perhaps you can teach knitting or help an organization develop a strategic plan.
- **Get involved.** You’ve completed an honest assessment—now you need to find your match. Several useful tools exist online, but you can also work with Career and Community Learning Center advisors (www.cclc.umn.edu).

support, to education and literacy, to environmental initiatives.

For more information on getting involved, visit www.cclc.umn.edu. ■

THE SILVER LINING

Positive Transformation Following Traumatic Events

Patricia Frazier, PhD—professor, Department of Psychology

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Mingjen Chen

editorial assistant, *Macromolecules*

I started taking an exercise class because I wanted to do everything in my power to reduce the risk of recurrence of my breast cancer. I took steps to make regular exercise a part of my life. Even though I am not always consistent, I never give up trying. After turning 40, I realized I've reached a balance between my physical and mental ability. This equilibrium leads down a path of happiness for me. Working out on a regular basis along with a stable job brings great contentment in life for me.

Some of us grow up believing that bad things don't happen to good people. Unfortunately, they happen to all of us. Our friends and loved ones die. We develop life-threatening illnesses. Our marriages dissolve, sometimes unexpectedly.

The good news is that most of us are resilient in the face of traumatic events. Very few people develop Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or significant distress following even very traumatic events. In fact, in the past few decades, researchers consistently have found that most who have experienced a traumatic event report that something good came out of it.

Good from Traumatic Events

People in countless studies describe similar kinds of positive changes after experiencing traumas.

Many who have experienced a traumatic life event say they now *appreciate life more*. In a study at the University of Minnesota, students

were asked about how the worst experience of their life affected them. One described the after-effects of the death of grandparents:

"Death of (sic) a close relative opened my eyes to how precious life is and how you have to cherish every moment... Life has so much more meaning to me after experiencing the sorrow and despair.."

Other people say their *priorities in life changed* after experiencing a traumatic life event and made their relationships stronger and closer than they were before the trauma. A University of Minnesota student describes the after-effects of his or her father's battle with cancer:

"My beliefs changed in that I saw life differently and took the time to enjoy the little things... Each day is a new day, and should be taken advantage of... I also value relationships with friends and family more...they are very important because you never know what life will throw at you."

Traumatic events can also lead people to *recognize and appreciate their own strengths*, allowing for new perspectives on life. This student discusses changes resulting from divorce and job loss:

“I have become so much more confident of my abilities and have done a lot of soul searching. When I got divorced and then lost my job I literally hit total rock bottom... Having gone through this experience has made me into a lot more optimistic person. Most set-backs I encounter now I view as just part of the lessons on my journey to a more productive life.”

Although most research on “post-traumatic growth” focuses on more internal qualities like life-appreciation, many report that a traumatic event led them to want to use their experience to help others and to make the world a better place. Indeed, many non-profit organizations, such as Mothers Against Drunk Driving, have been started by those affected by trauma.

While people may report some positive life-change as a result of a trauma, that does not preclude some distress as a result. In fact, some people report only unalloyed negative change. One student reflects on the negative impact she experienced as a result of her mother’s cancer diagnosis:

“I gained a harsh view of the world and myself. I lost most of my hope that people can truly be either good or trusted. I don’t trust that anyone can be sincere or do a kind act without a secret selfish purpose. I’m convinced that eventually everyone will leave me. In general, I greatly dislike people.”



Growth Following Trauma

An important question then is: Are some people more likely to report positive transformation following a trauma? Are some types of events more likely to lead to positive changes? A review of 87 studies revealed that females, ethnic minorities, younger individuals, those who are more religious, those who are more optimistic, and those who have experienced or are experiencing a more severe stressor are more likely to report growth.

Growth Hard to Measure

While post-traumatic growth research has increased in popularity, some caveats should be mentioned. First, survivors of traumatic events should not feel they “should” experience a positive transformation. Some report feeling badly that they have not had the positive life transformation they hear about from others. Surely, that is not a burden we want to place on people going through significant trauma.

Also, reports of growth are just that—reports. There are virtually no studies that assess whether individuals actually change in

positive ways from before to after a traumatic event. That kind of study can be difficult to conduct as it is unknown in advance who will experience a trauma.

To gather information about changes from pre- to post-trauma, five researchers conducted a study at the University of Minnesota and three other US universities tracking 1,528 students, some of whom experienced a trauma during the two months between the first and second assessments. Two important things were discovered. First, those who reported growth were not always the same people who actually changed. In other words, people are not always very good at estimating the extent to which they have changed as the result of a trauma. This means some reports of positive changes may not be accurate reflections of actual positive life change. But the second finding indicated that some participants did show increases in their appreciation of life, their sense of gratitude, and the quality of their relationships—all domains of post-traumatic growth reported by survivors. ■

STAYING FOCUSED & FEARLESS IN TIMES OF UNCERTAINTY

Renewing Commitment to Your Career

Donna M. Bennett, MA, LP—career consultant and associate counselor, Office of Human Resources

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Harvey Thorleifson

director, Minnesota Geological Survey

I work long hours. I leave the office to head to the Rec Center or to get together with colleagues to keep balance in my life. We go the extra mile in our work, and we need to know when to draw the line. I enjoy runs and triathlons as a test of progress, a goal to work toward and a social opportunity. I've made a lot of progress through the years in better planning fitness, nutrition and rest as a package. For me, well-being is living life to the fullest—and crossing the finish line with a smile, injury-free.

Everyone has been touched by the economic crisis of 2008. It has affected us all and penetrated all areas of our lives. Most of us can handle one crisis at a time, but when it affects our jobs, our homes, our families, our friends, our plans for the future—everything we know and have known—all at the same time, we are totally unprepared. For most of us, these are unprecedented times. We are no longer separated by a page out of history or family stories about the Great Depression. We are living it.

Reactions

This crisis was sudden and seemed to come out of nowhere and the reverberations are likely to be felt for a long time. Typical reactions caused by such sudden and multiple changes are a sense of powerlessness and lack of control over our lives. Some of us have also experienced a huge sense of loss. And with loss comes the natural emotional reactions of shock, denial, fear, sadness and anger. The field of neuroscience shows that rational thinking can become impaired when we are overcome by emotion, making us less likely to operate from a place of logic and reason.

In the workplace, that lack of logic and reason can translate into rumor-mongering, negativity and sometimes even panic. “In order to counteract a culture of fear at work, you need



to stay away from doom and gloom conversations,” says Rosie Barry, assistant director of Organizational Effectiveness in the Office of Human Resources. “If you find the negativity is coming from the people you talk to every day, talk to new people,” she says.

Action vs. Reaction

Other than staying away from those people and conversations that bring you down at work, how can you take back your life and career after a major setback or even the looming prospect of one? It depends on how deeply you are affected by the economic crisis (or any other major change) and its after-effects. You may find that your ways of coping in the past no longer work. You are not alone. Unprecedented times call for unprecedented action. And,

action is what will get you unstuck and moving forward.

“One thing you can do is be ready,” says Barry. “Get your resume up to date, keep your network alive and polish your skills through a class or a workshop to make yourself a more valuable prospect.” The worst thing you can do, she says, is to be in denial and wait too long to take action.

“You can also help yourself cope with career uncertainty by building your resilience. Eat healthfully, reach out to friends and exercise to keep a positive attitude,” says Barry.

While many things are beyond your control, you can control how you choose to operate and respond to both internal and external forc-

Resolving Job Uncertainty

Begin by taking stock. Notice how you respond to day-to-day tasks. Get impressions from people you trust about how they see you emotionally.

Think about the things for which you are grateful. In *Thanks! How the New Science of Gratitude Can Make You Happier*, Dr. Robert Emmons says, “Gratitude improves emotional and physical health, and it can strengthen relationships and communities.” Write down three to five things daily for which you feel grateful.

Talk it out. Who are you avoiding? Have that heart-to-heart with those impacted by your income (or you by theirs). Talk with your supervisor about your work load or the status of your unit or position.

Look for opportunity. Is there more you can learn or offer that enhances your work skills or value? Is your resume up to date? This can build your self-esteem—it reminds you of your talent and worth.

es. It also helps to realize that you are not alone—we are all in this together, and together we will persevere if we respect each other’s plight. We need to be assertive, but not aggressive; patient, but not passive; and cautious, yet creative. And the overall key, in all aspects of life including at work, is to try to stay hopeful and positive. ■

SHIFT TOWARD OPTIMISM

Cultivating Positive Habits of Mind

Cynthia M. Fuller, PhD, LP—staff psychologist, University Counseling & Consulting Services

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Sean Gabor

program manager,
Facilities Management Hazardous Material

Regular lunch-hour workouts are a priority for me—not just physically, but for my state of mind. That break in the day allows me to return to work in a better state of mind, and be more productive. My goal is to stay healthy, injury-free and in shape so I can do the things I want to do, like water ski and play soccer with my family. Choosing an active lifestyle is something I just keep doing—because it affects my outlook on each day.

“It is the nightly custom of every good mother after her children are asleep to rummage in their minds and put things straight for the next morning...” ~from Peter Pan, by J.M. Barry

The image of Mrs. Darling tidying up her children’s minds like drawers—folding up bad habits and tucking them away at the bottom, then strategically exposing the more positive ones above—was written to appeal and comfort. Actually, this kind of regular attention to habits of mind is a healthy, self-nurturing practice for adults, one that pays off for both mental and physical health.

People often develop self-punishing interior monologues, or negative self-talk, without awareness that they are hurting themselves. Negative and pessimistic habits of mind wreak havoc on self-esteem, capacity for pleasure, achieving success and, if prolonged, mental and physical health. Fortunately, there are several strategies for developing the habit of optimism and positive self-talk.

Engaging Values

Grounding actions in personal values is important to well-being. Although our values tend to remain relatively stable over time, how we prioritize them can change with life circumstances. For example, a person with young children

may prioritize time with family; earlier in life that person may have prioritized developing mastery and securing recognition from others, while later in life, service to others and their community. We may also balance multiple priorities simultaneously. The key is to periodically examine how our values are engaged in everyday life.

Using Strengths

People perform best and are more satisfied with their lives when they are aware of, and regularly act from, areas of strength. While strengths can be assessed in several ways, they are commonly seen as well-developed and recognizable personal characteristics and skills. Brainstorming gratifying activities and tasks, then identifying common themes is a good way to pinpoint personal strengths. Most find it effective to focus on utilizing four to six areas of strength.

Amplifying Positive Thoughts

Positive thinking increases a person's sense of well-being. According to the 2007 Mayo Clinic article, *Positive thinking: Practice this stress management skill*, positive thinking also imparts several health benefits: decreased negative stress, greater resistance to the common cold, reduced risk of coronary artery disease, and improved coping with health problems and life hardships. For people who are vulnerable to negative thinking, it is especially important to intentionally practice positive thinking daily. Effective strategies include talking back to negative thoughts, remembering and naming personal strengths and how they are currently being used, and taking time each day to identify and cherish at least six positive moments.

Managing Negative Thoughts

Recognizing the irrationality and distortions in negative thoughts is necessary to diminish their power in our lives. *The Anxiety & Phobia Workbook* by E.J. Bourne outlines common negative thought distortions experienced during anxiety-producing situations, and ways to manage them.

- **Overestimating negative outcomes.** Combat thoughts anticipating negative outcomes, usually beginning with "What if...," by assessing the realistic probability of the feared outcome(s). Outline actions that could be taken (a) to prevent the feared outcome, and (b) if the feared outcome occurred.
- **Underestimating capacity to cope.** Combat thoughts anticipating overwhelm, like "I just couldn't handle it," by asserting your ability to cope. List steps or strategies for coping with the situation.
- **Catastrophizing about outcomes.** Eradicate thoughts anticipating overwhelm and negative judgment of others, such as, "I'd be overwhelmed" and "They'll never forgive me," by exploring the worst-case scenario and how to handle it. Describe ways of coping with the situation.

Exercise or meditation centers, workshops, and mental health counselors or psychotherapists can also serve as catalysts for positive change.



Being Present

Focusing on the "here and now" allows you to stop dwelling on the past or future. There are several ways to practice "being in the moment"—meditation, prayer, sitting in silence and exercise. Key components to successful practice include (1) focusing on the activity—sitting, breathing, stretching, etc.; (2) observing thoughts that come up and naming them—for example, "that is a worry"; (3) refraining from judging; (4) re-focus-

ing on the activity; and (5) trusting the ability to "be" with whatever comes up.

Like Mrs. Darling organizing her children's thoughts each night, we can learn to cultivate daily positive habits of mind. These habits will comfort, foster physical and mental health, and increase resilience for coping with life events. ■

RAIN GARDENS

Beautify Outdoor Environments Naturally

Eleanor Burkett—extension educator, University of Minnesota Shoreland Education Program—Brainerd

faces of wellness



Teresa Bredahl

office supervisor,
Chemical Engineering and Material Science

My priority is my family, so paying attention to my health and well-being sometimes took a back seat as I chased after two young boys. For me, being healthy includes hanging with my kids and husband, enjoying a glass of wine with friends, getting away for a weekend, and having good relationships at work. Committing to regular classes at the Recreation Center means no excuses for not working out. Health, overall well-being, and regular activity are life-changing.

Creating your own rain garden has received a lot of media attention in the past couple of years as the latest trend in sustainable gardening. Have you wondered what the buzz is about?

“Issues with storm water runoff are increasing with every additional land development, so the installation of rain gardens becomes more and more imperative to preserve the purity of our water sources,” says Jackie Froemming, Crow Wing County Master Gardener Program Coordinator, and Extension Educator for Water Resource Management and Horticulture.

So, how do they work? Rain gardens are shallow depressions in the soil, usually about six to eight inches deep. They capture snow-melt and run-off from down spouts, sidewalks, driveways, roads and other hard surfaces. They are intended to hold water for up to two days, allowing it to absorb into the soil below and eventually make its way back to the groundwater (underground lakes and streams—which may be where your town gets its drinking water supply). The soil helps to filter out sediments and debris.

The plants in a rain garden play an important role—to take up nutrients, break down pollutants and of course



add beauty, habitat and interest to a landscape. Depending on the design, a rain garden can be perennial or full of native wildflowers. Shrubs and trees are a great choice since they are very efficient at absorbing water and nutrients.

As for the right size rain garden for your yard, Froemming says, “When deciding the size, designate about 10 percent of the area generating the run-off, such as a rooftop.” But if your yard is small, she says, “Even a smaller than desired rain garden will still be able to retain the ‘first flush’ of runoff during a rain event.”

Depending on the existing soil, it may not take much more than mixing in some compost and adding a layer of mulch before adding plants. If the soil is sandy the com-

post and mulch will help to keep the plants moist between rains. If the soil has more clay, the soil may need to be dug 18 to 24 inches and mixed with and compost in a 1:1 ratio then filled in with soil (allowing for two inches of mulch and the four to eight inch depression to hold water).

Not all sites are suitable for rain gardens especially those with a high water table—two-and-a-half to three feet is the minimum recommendation to allow water to be filtered before entering the water table. Also, a landscape with a slope greater than 15 percent may be too steep. Rain gardens should be located at least ten feet away from basements to prevent flooding. They should also be well away from cement slabs, septic systems and wells.

Rain Garden Basics

- Choose a low or wet spot where water drains naturally, 15 feet plus from home foundation, as close to the street as possible. Sandy soil works well, clay-soil does not.
- Check for underground power lines/other utilities. Use a garden hose to outline area in any shape.
- Dig a shallow depression, 12 to 18 inches deep at center, feathering out to perimeter. Dig a shallow trench from downspout or sump pump to garden.
- Choose native plants and cultivars that tolerate drought and occasional drenching. Plant about 18 inches apart—one per every 2.5 square feet.
- Mow or remove dead vegetation each spring, or burn it off if local ordinances allow. Weed three times per growing season.

Adapted from www.dnr.state.mn.us/volunteer/mayjun04/rain-gardens.html

Refer to the side bar to help you make a plan—something any garden expert will tell you to do first. And remember—stretch out before and after gardening as you would for any workout to help prevent back and other aches and pains.

Rain gardening is not only healthy for the body, it is also food for the soul. It feels good to keep active, add habitats for animals and help to preserve lakes and rivers. ■

WELL-BEING THROUGH DIET

The Power of Anti-Oxidants

Lacey Arneson—MPH student, RD candidate

Melissa Nelson, PhD, RD—assistant professor, Epidemiology & Community Health

These days we're hearing more and more about antioxidants, whether it be on TV, in the newspaper or online. These compounds are touted for their anti-cancer properties, anti-aging properties and other "cleansing" health benefits. But what exactly are antioxidants?

Antioxidants are found naturally in foods and include nutrients such as beta carotene, vitamin C, vitamin E and selenium. These substances can repair damage that has been done to cells, or prevent cell damage from happening in the first place. Antioxidants could also improve functioning of the immune system and may lower risk for certain cancers and infections.

These compounds work by significantly slowing or preventing the oxidative process (damage from oxygen) caused by substances called free radicals. The antioxidant process can be likened to stopping an apple from turning brown. Normally, when you cut an apple it turns brown because of oxidative damage. However, when you dip the apple in orange or lemon juice, the Vitamin C prevents the apple from turning brown, preventing the rapid aging process due to oxidative damage. In humans, damage from free radicals can lead to cell dysfunction and the onset of problems like heart disease and diabetes.

faces of wellness



Peg Hansen

program administrator, Continuing Dental Education

I have been a regular "lunch-timer" at the Recreation Center for over 15 years. Going to fitness classes or reading while I'm on a bike has helped me to control my stress level, and expend energy positively. It provides a sense of calmness and gives me the ability to handle what life throws at me, making me a stronger person physically, mentally and socially. Being active has introduced me to some of the most kind-hearted, health-minded people at the U—people with good energy trying to fit health into their lives, and being kind and respectful of their place in the world.

“As we learn more about the health benefits of antioxidants, it becomes more apparent that they can have an important role in helping us live longer, healthier lives,” says Melissa Nelson, assistant professor in Epidemiology and Community Health.

The United States Department of Agriculture’s chief scientific agency, the Agricultural Research Service, recently conducted a study on the antioxidant capacity of over 100 foods and published the results in a 2004 issue of the Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry. Findings indicate that the top twenty antioxidant-containing foods, based on serving size, are:

- 1) Blueberries
- 2) Cranberries
- 3) Cooked artichokes
- 4) Blackberries
- 5) Prunes
- 6) Strawberries
- 7) Raspberries
- 8) Red Delicious and Granny Smith apples
- 9) Pecans
- 10) Sweet cherries
- 11) Black plums
- 12) Russet potatoes
- 13) Plums
- 14) Gala apples
- 15) Walnuts
- 16) Golden Delicious and Fuji apples
- 17) Dates
- 18) Green and Red Anjou pears
- 19) Hazelnuts
- 20) Navel oranges

This list highlights that the best sources of antioxidants include berries, vegetables, other fruits and nuts. The 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend that an

Sources of Antioxidants

The best sources of antioxidants include berries, vegetables, other fruits and nuts. What are serving sizes of these different foods and how can you incorporate them into your diet? It’s not as hard as you might think. Here are some examples:

How much is one serving?	How can I incorporate these into my diet?
½ cup fresh, frozen or canned fruits or vegetables	Throw a handful of berries onto your cereal in the morning.
¾ cup fruit juice or vegetable juice	Blend your favorite fruits together with yogurt, frozen juice and ice for a smoothie.
1 medium-sized piece of fruit	Keep an apple on your desk to eat as an afternoon snack.
¼ cup dried fruit	Mix dried fruits and nuts with salads to add a sweet crunch.
1 ounce of nuts	Toss nuts and dried fruit together for a quick trail mix.



average adult should consume at least two cups of fruit and two-and-a-half cups of vegetables per day. The guidelines also recommend that most fat intake should be poly- and monounsaturated fatty acids. While somewhat high in calories, nuts can be a great source of healthy fat when substituted for other fats in your diet.

Nelson says, “Fats are essential, but should be eaten in moderation,

and consumed in the form of nuts, olive oils or certain other vegetable oils as much as possible.”

Overall, by choosing foods high in antioxidants to meet recommended levels of fruits, vegetables and fats, as well as consuming a balanced diet and engaging in regular physical activity, we can take important strides in maintaining a healthy body and preventing chronic diseases. ■

NOW THAT'S DISTANCE LEARNING

Adapted from the January/February 2009 issue of MINNESOTA, the University of Minnesota Alumni Association magazine



Students in Paul Porter's class have to forgive him if he seems a bit distant this spring semester. Porter, a department of agronomy and plant genetics professor, is almost 10,000 miles away from his St. Paul classroom, teaching "Food and Agriculture from Cairo to Cape Town at 10 mph" while pedaling a bicycle from Egypt to South Africa."

The course consists of Porter's observations as he travels through ten African countries with Canadian-based bicycling tour-group Tour d'Afrique until May 9th, studying local food, agriculture and ecosystems. He sends observations back

to the St. Paul campus via satellite phone, e-mails and audio blog postings on his Web site. Graduate student/teaching assistant, Maggie Mangan, facilitates interactions with students.

"I hope the students will learn more about Africa in general but also will have more of an appreciation for what we have in the United States," Porter says.

To check on Porter's progress and learn more about African agro-ecosystems, visit

www.paulporter.wordpress.com. ■

PRACTICAL SAVING STRATEGIES

Shirley Anderson-Porisch—family resource management educator, Extension Courtesy U of M Newswire

The current economic situation has made many of us feel insecure about employment, stretched to the limit and uncertain about our financial futures. More than ever, we must evaluate current spending, save money and be purposeful about using household income.

To be a successful money manager, regardless of income, the first step is to detail every dollar you spend.

List current net monthly income, including any money or cash assistance coming into the household. Then list monthly expenses

— those that occur every month as well as those occurring every few months. An example might be listing a \$300 premium car insurance paid every 3 months as a monthly expense of \$100 for three months.

To keep yourself organized, create categories for your expenses, such as housing, food, transportation, health care, personal, payments and recreation.

Once your total income and total expenses are outlined, it is easier to identify where changes in spending may start.

Households that make spending changes can more easily protect basic needs like housing and transportation. Establishing a 3-6 month reserve to cover basic living expenses is a good goal. Money saved on expenses could be reallocated to these savings.

Unless you receive very limited income, consider cutting back rather than cutting out. Cutting back reinforces new behavior in a positive rather than a negative way. Commit to strategies that will set you up for savings success. ■

TEACHING TOLERANCE

Anthony Bettendorf—residence director, Housing & Residential Life

Fifty-two students and 16 facilitators recently participated in an off-campus retreat to educate students about social justice and community leadership.

The Social Justice Leadership Retreat, offered to students over Martin Luther King weekend since 2005, teaches students to better understand and value others at the University and in the

greater community. Through activities and stories, participants explore issues of oppression and privilege, create contacts and support networks across campus, and develop skills that make them allies for many different groups. Those who have attended a past retreat spend the weekend focusing on a particular identity, with the most recent examining race. Students apply to participate start-

ing in September. There is also an opportunity for faculty and staff to be involved as facilitators for the retreat experience.

For more information on the Social Justice Leadership Retreat, contact Anthony Bettendorf at bette018@umn.edu or Grant Anderson at ande4174@umn.edu. ■

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LAUGHTER FOR THE SOUL

Sarah Routman—executive director, Hillel

According to Milton Berle, “Laughter is an instant vacation.” Surprisingly, 45 minutes of laughter yoga can feel like a vacation—no reservations required. Let go of your inhibitions and discover what laughter can do for you and everyone else in your life.

Laughter is a key to unlocking our joy. It triggers chemical reactions in the brain, strengthens core muscles, and sometimes even core

principles of living. As an old Yiddish proverb says, “What soap is to the body, laughter is to the soul.”

Started in India, laughter yoga is now practiced in 53 countries, including the United States, and is even available at the Twin Cities campus. Anyone can do the simple exercises (stretching, breathing and laughing). No need to be flexible, wear special clothing, or know anything about downward

dogs, upright rhinos or uptight colleagues.

On campus, laughter yoga can be offered any time depending on interest. It is a great ice breaker for conferences and other groups. Class sizes can range from 10 to 40.

For more information, contact Sarah Routman at sroutman@umn.edu. ■

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OFFICE YOGA

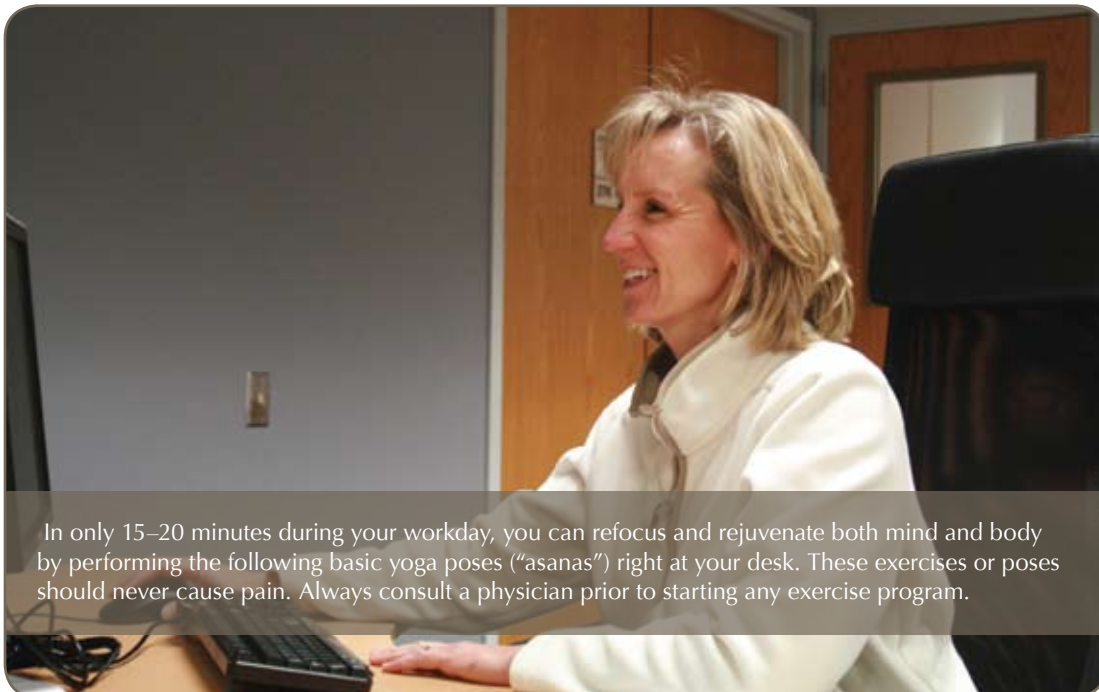
Annette Biggs—fitness director, Department of Recreational Sports

Yoga is a mind-body practice originating from ancient Indian philosophy, and has been in existence for over 2,000 years perhaps as long as 5,000 years. There are various styles of yoga, each style combining its own unique blend of physical postures, breathing techniques and meditation.

According to a 2007 study by the National Center for Health Statis-

tics and the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM), 38.3 percent of adults in the United States have used some form of CAM in 2007. The second most commonly used CAM in 2007 was deep breathing (12.7 percent), followed by meditation (9.4 percent). There is growing research evidence indicating that yoga improves overall strength, flexibility, posture, body composi-

tion and lung capacity. Yoga also improves muscle relaxation, enhances stress-coping mechanisms and is shown to help with conditions such as anxiety, depression and insomnia. Research is currently investigating the effect of yoga on blood pressure, diabetes, HIV, certain types of cancer, multiple sclerosis and smoking cessation.



In only 15–20 minutes during your workday, you can refocus and rejuvenate both mind and body by performing the following basic yoga poses (“asanas”) right at your desk. These exercises or poses should never cause pain. Always consult a physician prior to starting any exercise program.

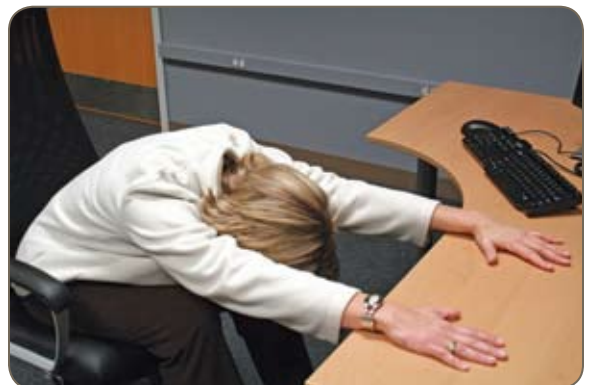
EXERCISE 1: Half Spinal Twist



1. Sit upright with feet anchored on the floor. Straighten spine while opening the chest.
2. Using desk as resistance, exhale and gently twist to right. Stop twisting when approaching 90 degrees.
3. Inhale as you return to starting position. In the same manner, twist to left.

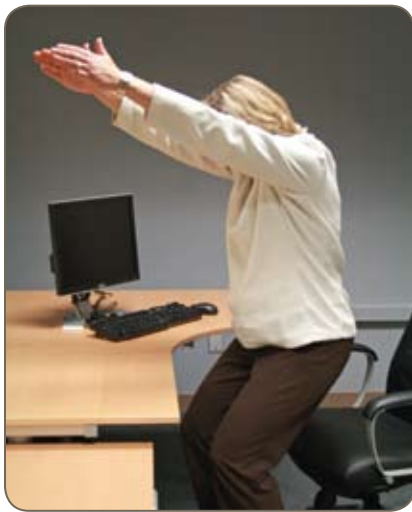
EXERCISE 2: Downward Dog

1. Place hands on desk, shoulder-width apart. Slowly push chair away from desk.
2. Extend arms and position head between the elbow joints. Gently elongate and strengthen spine while keeping eyes on the floor.
3. Push “into” desk to stretch shoulders and back. Breathe comfortably, yet deeply.



EXERCISE 3: Mountain Pose

1. With mind and body at attention, face east.
 2. With feet together and palms in a prayer-like position, inhale and extend arms overhead. Lift arms to the fullest extent of the chest.
 3. Focus on hands, close eyes and with the mind silent, deeply exhale.
-

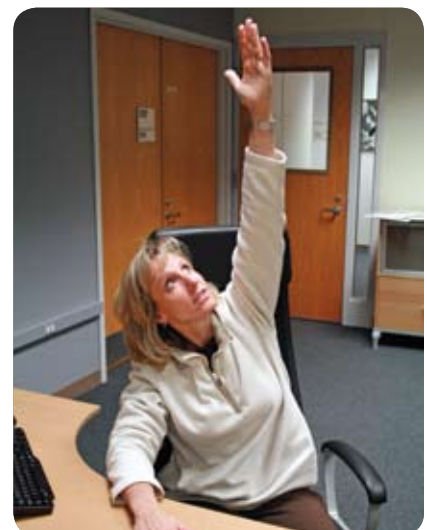


EXERCISE 4: Chair Pose

1. With feet hip-width apart, bend knees as if sitting in a chair. Straighten spine and extend arms 45 degrees with the floor.
 2. Keep the neck in a straight line and tailbone pushed back.
 3. Close eyes (if you do not have concerns about balance) and breathe deeply, moving only the diaphragm during inhalation and exhalation.
-

EXERCISE 5: Seated Side Angle Pose

1. Rest right elbow on desk and open chest.
2. Align right shoulder joint with elbow joint and extend left arm overhead.
3. Slowly turn neck to focus eyes on left hand. Close eyes (if you do not have concerns about balance) and breathe.



FROM GRIEF. TO *Joy* One Family's Story

Kara Fresh—marketing and development director, Department of Recreational Sports

Lisa Lemler—assistant department director for programs and wellness, Department of Recreational Sports

Six years ago the Meslow family was living what some might consider the American dream. Jenny and Doug were successfully raising two teenage sons and held rewarding careers. Jenny was the CHIP director for the University of Minnesota's Academic Health Center and Doug had been recently elected to serve in the state legislature as the representative for White Bear Lake. Their sons, Peter and Scott, were model students and active in high school sports. The family attended church regularly, were active in their community and enjoyed spending time with family and friends.

Jenny and Doug believe much of the family harmony was a result of their intentional parenting. Jenny and Doug sought meaningful ways to introduce Peter and Scott to each new phase in their lives. As Peter and Scott grew into men, they realized the full impact these efforts had—they were becoming

responsible and respectful stewards of their family and society.

As with all families, the Meslows encountered bumps along the way. But overall, the Meslows' strong convictions and family bond carried them through. In January of 2003, this fortitude was put to the test when the family faced devastating news.

After apparently spraining his ankle during a high school basketball game, Peter continued to feel pain well after his ankle should have healed. Doug suspected a hairline fracture at worst, and took his son in for routine x-rays. Three days later—surrounded by his family—Peter was diagnosed with osteosarcoma, a malignant cancer that attacks growing bones.

Keeping It Together

Jenny and Doug realized immediately that they needed to rely on their tendencies to be intentional

to endure what lay ahead. Reflecting on the days following Peter's diagnosis, Jenny says, "I knew this was Peter's journey and there wasn't much I could do about the outcome, but I could have a lot of say in how we would react, how we would be emotionally and spiritually." The Meslows also knew their commitment to one another would be the key to moving forward.

The family made a pact to focus on what they could control in the coming days instead of dwelling on the things they couldn't. Jenny says, "I did not spend an ounce of time belaboring why—why never got me anywhere good. I always asked, 'what's next'."

The family also committed to never leaving each other alone. This meant regularly checking in to make sure they were all doing what they needed to get through each day. The family also ensured that Peter never spent a night alone

in the hospital. Often this meant the two brothers, who described themselves as best friends, played video games and watched movies together, being teenagers despite the circumstances. Doug says that during those times, “Scott started to become the older brother to Peter—and both Scott and Pete grew up fast.”

Jenny and Doug also made a concerted effort to ensure Scott did not feel neglected while their attentions were turned to Peter. In a bit of a role reversal, Scott frequently took on the responsibility of looking out for his parents. Doug says “Scott looked out for us, too. Scott made it clear to us that he never felt neglected. However, I am quite certain that there are times that we neglected Scott—but I think he understood that we were doing our best.”

Outside of the family unit, Jenny and Doug discovered the need for a support system of friends and family. Jenny says, “We knew we could not do this alone; we leaned on an inner core circle of friends. They demonstrated they would, could and wanted to be there for us.” The Meslows also realized the need to let go of those who either couldn’t or did not want to understand their ordeal. “There was a loss of some relationships. Those are the twists and turns of life. We’re OK with that—and we think they are too.”

While many of the family’s strategies for coping with Peter’s illness were intentional, those that carried them through were the little rituals they created along the way to celebrate milestones. For instance, each time Peter would return from the hospital he would search the house for the welcome home banner



the family had deemed “the roving sign.” After finding the sign, he would shower to ‘wash away’ the hospital, which all members of the family found cathartic.

As with many cases of cancer, Peter is not a living survivor. He passed away on February 8, 2005, just three days after returning from the set of the show 24—an extension of his Make A Wish experience. As Doug says, “He went out on top. We learned a lot through him. Pete was physically and emotionally tougher than anyone we’ve met. That’s an incredible inspiration to us all as we continue on.”

Intentional Healing

For those who have navigated through a tragedy, they know there isn’t a manual for “continuing on” or healing. The Meslows recognized that the support system they developed during Peter’s illness would be the foundation to help everyone heal.

With any tragic situation, moving through grief and healing is a unique experience. The Meslow

family became acutely aware that grieving and healing impacts the family as a whole, and each individual member. In order to heal, Jenny and Doug again focused on an intentional process. “Healing doesn’t happen—you need to be purposeful and make it happen,” they say.

The family propped each other up, knowing they each had to move on in their own time and in their own way. Jenny agrees that leaning on one another—and being tuned in to each other’s needs—has been key in understanding how they each individually heal. “There are times when I know Doug is ‘on the verge’, and it’s my turn to pull it together. He senses it too. I still have emotions. I still grieve.”

Jenny and Doug were well aware of the marital failures that often happen as a result of the loss of a child—some statistics suggest as many as 80 percent of couples end up separating. But being a couple gave them strength through Peter’s disease—and being committed to their relationship, is a part

continued on page 28

of the healing process. “Jenny and I needed to put our relationship first. Being a dad is part of my life—but it isn’t all of who I am.” Doug emphasizes, “Remembering to focus on other things that are part of the person I am, including being a husband, is important.”

While Jenny and Doug continue to strengthen and support one another, they also turn their attention to Scott. Jenny says, “I didn’t know how Scott would do—I hoped he would still see the world as a good place.” Jenny and Doug know Scott has supportive friends—friends of Peter’s, too—to support him. “Writing has been a good catharsis”, says Doug, “for a young man forced to grow up fast after the loss of someone so close.”

For a family rich with traditions and rituals, they recognized that to heal they had to let go of some traditions that involved Peter. “The first year was really raw, the milestones—family traditions, holidays, anniversaries—were horrible. The first Christmas was almost unbearable,” Jenny says. Ultimately the family realized the need to come to a consensus about what

to let go of—sitting around a familiar family dining table, for instance—and how to manage that loss of tradition and still move on.

A tragedy has a way of affecting one’s personality. The challenge becomes navigating back to who one was before the tragedy—or rediscovering parts of that person. Jenny now realizes that the experience thrust her into a period of life that was somber, serious and in a constant state of worry. Being a self-described “light person forced to live a serious life,” the challenge in her personal healing was to find that joyful person once again. “How might it look to the world if I am happy again?” she says of that rediscovery period, “Is it okay to laugh hysterically at something?”

Turning to the familiar—such as their strong friendships—was also healing. “There were many people who lost Peter. He had two surrogate moms and dads, a daycare couple, and countless friends and family members who desperately miss him. It is healing to us to be able to comfort them.”

Sometimes the familiar only brought pain. Doug says, “We were an engaged, visible family in church—and that was important to us. However, for the church community, there was a certain amount of pain in seeing our family—we were ‘that poor family’. As far as going back to church—what was comforting before was now painful.”

Finding Joy

Over time, Jenny, Doug and Scott have begun working their way back. “I don’t want to minimize it.” says Jenny, “The level of parental pain for four years, I cannot even articulate it.” However, they have spent those years digging their way out and healing the best way they know how. Even with the pain there is little regret, says Doug, “I’d do it all over even to have those 19 years with Peter.”

Intentional efforts to be a part of life again have been essential in the family’s healing process. Engaging with people living rich lives, enjoying the company of friends and family, serving others, and being around positive people help move them forward as a family and as individuals. Jenny says, “I believe there is something in our physiology that simply pushes our bodies forward—that physically we need to move on.” Moving on through the grief to joy and life. ■



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Spring 2009 Survey

Wellness Works was first published in Fall 2006 in an effort to educate and engage the university community by raising awareness of wellness resources and initiatives on campus that strive to improve health and well-being. The editorial group for the magazine continues to evaluate all aspects of the magazine, including distribution methods.

Instructions: Cut along dotted line, fold in half and place in campus mail. If not using campus mail, place in envelope and mail to address provided below.



wellnessworks

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Please take a moment to complete the following survey, and let us know if you would like to continue receiving *Wellness Works*.

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Please rank the following article types in order of personal interest, with 1 being the most interesting and 6 being the least.

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|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Feature Articles (pp. 5 & 26 in this issue) | <input type="checkbox"/> Articles based on the 6 dimensions of wellness (pp. 8–19 in this issue) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Campus Wellness in Action (p. 27 in this issue) | <input type="checkbox"/> Ask the Expert (p. 32 in this issue) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fitness Tips and Techniques (p. 23 in this issue) | |

Please suggest article topics you would like to see in future editions of *Wellness Works*.

Please offer any additional feedback specific to *Wellness Works*.

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10 TIPS TO SPRING CLEAN *your life*



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2. Plant a tree in honor of Arbor Day—April 24, 2009. Find tips to celebrate with your family, school or community: **www.arborday.org/arborday/index.cfm**
3. Re-evaluate your diet. Go beyond fat and calories on the label. Processed foods have become a big part of the American diet—with sodium being a hidden culprit. Learn about sodium and how to decrease intake: **www.mckinley.uiuc.edu/Handouts/reducing_sodium_diet.html**
4. Small items really do add up. Calculate your personal expenses and commit to a budget. Use this 'pen and paper' version to re-think your financial approach: **www.balancepro.net/pdf/mmp.pdf**
5. Revise your health and fitness goals every three months. When was the last time you thought about your New Year's resolutions? **www.webmd.com/diet/features/time-to-renew-new-years-resolutions**
6. Contribute to the health of your neighborhood. Convince a few people—or the whole block—to share some garden space for vegetables and herbs. The Wedge, Seward Community Co-op and Urban Earth are just a few co-ops in the metro area. **www.purefood.org/coops.htm**
7. Clear out the book case, magazine and newspaper racks—and put them to good use. Create an office book swap or go on-line **www.paperbackswap.com**. Sell back the books at **Amazon.com**, or consider donating books, magazines or newspapers to local charities, boys & girls clubs or assisted living facilities.
8. Rearranging your office or work-space can positively change your perspective. Move your computer, bring in a live plant, or hang some pictures or favorite quotes. Feng Shui your day! **www.dummies.com/how-to/content/using-feng-shui-at-work-private-offices-and-cubicl.html**
9. Strengthen or renew your commitment to friends and family. Write a letter, make a phone call—get together to talk face-to-face.
10. Feel good about yourself. Do something nice for someone else each day. Open a door, drop a thank you note, return a smile, or let someone go ahead of you in line.

answers for well-being

meet the personal trainer



Annette Biggs

Annette Biggs, fitness director for the Department of Recreational Sports, is an ACSM-certified Health Fitness Specialist. She supervises fitness center operations, as well as the group fitness and personal training programs. Biggs received her Master's degree in exercise science from Wichita State University.

Questions for the personal trainer? Contact Annette at 612.626.3407 or biggs010@umn.edu.

What kind of exercises can I do to get rid of my “love handles?”

Spot reduction is not possible. There is no particular exercise or set of exercises you can do to reduce fat in a particular area of your body. There are genetic as well as gender differences in the way our bodies naturally store fat. The bad news? Neither of these variables are under our control. Males typically distribute fat around the abdominal region, while females typically distribute theirs around the mid-section, buttocks and thighs. Weight loss has to be viewed from

I want to try yoga, but there are so many styles. Which style is best suited for a beginner?

Some yoga styles place emphasis on physical movement, others on breathing or chanting, and some combine both. “Hatha” yoga is a good option to start with as this gentle style of yoga combines a slow pace with basic yoga poses (“asanas”). Beginners may also enjoy “Kundalini” yoga. The focus here is on higher consciousness and greater flexibility, combining physical movement with breathing/chanting in order to release energy

in the lower body and allowing it to move upwards. When considering a yoga class, ask the instructor about his or her training, and whether the class emphasizes movement or meditation. Look for an instructor who offers options to modify poses and encourages all levels of practice. Because there are so many styles, choose what fits your individual skill and fitness level best. Always consult a physician prior to starting any yoga or exercise program. ■

Should I do abs every day?

No, not necessarily. Like any other muscle group, abdominal muscles also need 48 hours rest between exercise sessions. “Ah, my abs hurt!” is not always an indication that you are exercising effectively, nor safely.

Balance abdominal exercises with lower back strengthening exercises as both muscle groups play an integral role in stabilizing the spine and maintaining proper posture. ■



a total body perspective. The good news? You are in control of your body physically. By balancing cardiovascular exercise, strength training, proper nutrition and taking a hard look at lifestyle habits, you can be ready for the first steps toward weight loss. *To review the physical activity guidelines recently released by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to help you make realistic goals, visit www.health.gov/PAGuidelines/fact-SheetProf.aspx.* ■

Every year I make a resolution to lose weight. How can I renew my commitment to health without falling into the diet trap?

You're not alone. More than half of New Year's Resolution-makers have weight loss on their list. There are several keys to making perma-



I keep hearing about detox and cleansing diets. Does my body need something special to cleanse? Are these diets safe or effective?

The term "detox diet" has a wide interpretation. For some it means abstaining from a particular food, such as dairy, grains or alcohol. Some detox regimens involve subsisting on concocted drinks or pills or colonic cleanses. Extreme programs can be dangerous and there is no evidence that detox diets support long-term weight loss. The body appropriately removes toxins and cleanses on its own. Thinking of detoxification in terms of cleansing yourself of poor nutritional habits is a healthier perspective. If you need help identifying which habits to focus on, seek out a registered dietitian. ■

nent changes. First, set reasonable goals and write them down. Make your objectives specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and set a timeframe. Second, set goals based on behaviors (such as fewer restaurant meals or more vegetables) instead of numbers on the scale. Fi-

nally, spend time reflecting on and analyzing your behavior when you encounter setbacks. Feelings of guilt and all-or-nothing thinking sabotage your efforts. Understand yourself, decide how to handle the situation better next time, and get back on track. ■

I have heard that chronic inflammation is at the core of many health problems because it prevents tissue repair and renewal and over-stimulates the immune system. Which foods are anti-inflammatory?

Foods that promote inflammation are high in sugar and saturated or trans fat from animal products or partially hydrogenated oils. Foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids, mono-unsaturated fat or antioxidants are anti-inflammatory. Examples are

salmon, walnuts, flax, avocados, olive oil, and fruits and vegetables. Anti-inflammatory diets are sometimes billed as a Mediterranean diet. Most are healthy and balanced, but always have your diet approved by your health care provider. ■

meet the dietitian



Christine Twait

Christine Twait received her Master's degree in nutrition from the University of Minnesota and is a registered and licensed dietitian. She works for Boynton Health Service as a nutrition counselor for students, health coach for staff and faculty and a health promotion specialist within the clinic and the University community.

Questions for the dietitian?

Contact Christine at 612.624.4663 or at ctwait@bhs.umn.edu.

answers for well-being

meet the outdoor guy



Mitch Hoffman

Mitch Hoffman received his master's degree in recreation administration from Middle Tennessee State University. Hoffman is the program director for the Center for Outdoor Adventure, an instructor for the School of Kinesiology, and a member of the National Board of Directors for the Association of Outdoor and Recreation Education.

Questions for the outdoor guy? Contact Mitch 612.624.9779 or at mitch@umn.edu.

What is the best time of year to go to the Boundary Waters?

It's often a choice between weather and bugs. The peak season in the BWCA is considered July and August when the water is warmer, but there are more insects. Summer generally means more campers, making it harder to find an

open site. I really love May, and though it is cooler, there are fewer people. If you wait until fall, you'll experience incredible colors in the BWCA and generally encounter fewer people. It all depends on what you're hoping to experience. ■

What is your favorite outdoor gear?

I probably use the Marmot Dri-Clima Wind Shirt more than any other piece of gear—it's easily #1 on my packing list for climbing, paddling or backpacking any time of the year. It breaks the wind, wicks away moisture and takes up nearly zero space in my pack. It's great for cross country skiing and running in the cooler months.

The Black Diamond Apollo Lantern provides a lot of light at camp and is smaller than a travel mug. It's perfect if you can't have a fire or the rain forces you into your tent earlier than planned. A lantern also instantly creates a group gathering place after sundown. ■

How can I get started backpacking?

Backpacking doesn't have to involve hiking 10 miles a day—a short hike will quickly separate you from the crowds. There are some great hike-in campsites in the Minnesota State Parks where you can try backpacking without wandering too far out of your comfort zone. Afton is close to the Twin Cities. Longer loops around the park will help you get used to carrying a pack. Choose different loops in and out to see more. Reserve a backcountry site in advance—they can fill up on weekends.

Backpacking equipment shouldn't intimidate or hold you back. You can rent everything from the Center for Outdoor Adventure for about \$30-40 per person per weekend. Renting equipment lets you try backpacking and gives you consumer information if you purchase your own gear.

Lastly, learn the basic principles of Leave No Trace to minimize your impact on the land. You can find more at www.LNT.org. ■



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THE WELLNESS COLLABORATIVE

The Wellness Collaborative is comprised of representatives from across campus with an active interest in the well-being of the University of Minnesota–Twin Cities community. The group, which first met in 2005, has a vision to make wellness a core value of the university community. Through informal meetings, the Wellness Collaborative works to fulfill its mission of enhancing the culture of wellness on campus through collaborative efforts.

If you would like more information, please contact Wellness Collaborative chair, Lisa Lemler, at 612.625.8822 or lemler@umn.edu.

Academic Health Center

Phone: 612.625.4119

Website: www.ahc.umn.edu

Aurora Center for Advocacy and Education

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Website: www.umn.edu/aurora

Boynton Health Service

Phone: 612.625.8400

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Center for Spirituality & Healing

Phone: 612.624.9459

Email: dimon007@umn.edu

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Department of Recreational Sports

Phone: 612.625.6800

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Disability Services

Phone: 612.626.2644

Email: ds@umn.edu

Website: www.ds.umn.edu

Employee Wellness Program

Phone: 612.626.WELL (9355)

Email: well@umn.edu

Website: www.umn.edu/ohr/well

Hillel: The Jewish Student Center

Phone: 612.379.4026

Email: Hillel@umn.edu

Website: www.ujews.com

Housing & Residential Life

Phone: 612.624.2994

Email: housing@umn.edu

Website: www.housing.umn.edu

Interfaith Campus Coalition

Website: www.iccmn.org

School of Kinesiology

Phone: 612.625.5300

Email: kin@umn.edu

Website: www.education.umn.edu/kin

University Counseling & Consulting Services

Phone: 612.624.3323

Website: www.uccs.umn.edu

University Dining Services

Phone: 612.626.7626

Email: dining@umn.edu

Website: www.umn.edu/dining

University of Minnesota Physicians

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Email: tmestad@umphysicians.umn.edu

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